

Did You Know?

Methamphetamines

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Methamphetamine is a very addictive stimulant drug. It can be smoked, injected, inhaled or taken by mouth. It has many street names, such as speed, meth, and chalk. Methamphetamine hydrochloride, the crystal form inhaled by smoking, is referred to as ice, crystal, glass and tina.

What is its legal status in the United States? Methamphetamine is a Schedule II stimulant under the Controlled Substances Act, which means that it has a high potential for abuse and limited medical use. It is available only through a prescription that cannot be refilled. Today there is only one legal meth product, Desoxyn®. It is currently marketed in 5-milligram tablets and has very limited use in the treatment of obesity and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).



What is its effect on the mind? Meth is a highly addictive drug with potent central nervous system (CNS) stimulant properties. Those who smoke or inject it report a brief, intense sensation, or rush. Oral ingestion or snorting produces a long-lasting high instead of a rush, which reportedly can continue for as long as half a day. Both the rush and the high are believed to result from the release of very high levels of the neurotransmitter dopamine into areas of the brain that regulate feelings of pleasure. Long-term meth use results in many damaging effects, including addiction. Chronic meth abusers exhibit violent behavior, anxiety, confusion, insomnia, and psychotic features including paranoia, aggression, visual and auditory hallucinations, mood disturbances, and delusions — such as the sensation of insects creeping on or under the skin. Such paranoia can result in homicidal or suicidal thoughts. Researchers have reported that as much as 50% of the dopamine-producing cells in the brain can be damaged after prolonged exposure to relatively low levels of meth .

What is its effect on the body?

Taking even small amounts of meth can result in: Increased wakefulness, increased physical activity, decreased appetite, rapid breathing and heart rate, irregular heartbeat, increased blood pressure, and hyperthermia (overheating).

High doses can elevate body temperature to dangerous, sometimes lethal, levels, and cause convulsions and even cardiovascular collapse and death. Meth abuse may also cause extreme anorexia, memory loss, and severe dental problems.

What are its overdose effects?

High doses may result in death from stroke, heart attack, or multiple organ problems caused by overheating.

Which drugs cause similar effects?

Cocaine and potent stimulant pharmaceuticals, such as amphetamines and methylphenidate, produce similar effects.